

# Unit 4 Tense consolidation: present perfect

## Explanations

Present perfect  
simple

- 1 Present perfect simple refers to:  
Recent events, without a definite time given. The recentness may be indicated by *just*.  
*We've missed the turning.*  
*I've just seen a ghost!*  
Indefinite events, which happened at an unknown time in the past. No definite time is given.  
*Jim has had three car accidents. (up to the present)*  
Indefinite events which may have an obvious result in the present  
*I've twisted my ankle. (that's why I'm limping)*  
With state verbs, a state which lasts up to the present.  
*I've lived here for the past ten years.*  
A habitual action in a period of time up to the present  
*I've been jogging every morning for the last month.*

- 2 Contrasts with past simple  
Past simple is used with time expressions which refer to definite times. The time may be stated or understood. Compare:  
*I've bought a new car. (indefinite)*  
*I bought a new car last week. (definite)*  
*I bought the car after all. (implied definite: the car we talked about)*  
Choice between past simple and present perfect for recent events may depend on the mental attitude of the speaker. This in turn may depend on whether the speaker feels distant in time or place from the event.  
*I've left my wallet in the car. I'm going back to get it.*  
Here the speaker may be about to return, and feels that the event is connected with the present.  
*I left my wallet in the car. I'm going back to get it.*  
Here the speaker may feel separated in time from the event, or be further away.

Present perfect  
continuous

- 1 Present perfect continuous (progressive) can refer to a range of meanings, depending on the time expression used and the context.  
A state which lasts up to the present moment  
*I've been waiting for you for three hours!*  
An incomplete activity  
*I've been cleaning the house but I still haven't finished.*  
(To emphasise duration  
*I've been writing letters all morning.*

A recently finished activity  
*I've been running. That's why I look hot.*

A repeated activity  
*I've been taking French lessons this year.*

- 2 Contrasts with present perfect simple  
There may be little contrast when some state verbs are used.  
*How long have you lived here?*  
*How long have you been living here?*
- Some verbs (especially *sit, lie, wait* and *stay*) prefer the continuous form.  
There may be a contrast between completion and incompleteness, especially if the number of items completed is mentioned.  
Completed: emphasis on achievement  
*I've ironed five shirts this morning.*  
Incomplete, or recently completed: emphasis on duration  
*I've been ironing my shirts this morning.*

Time expressions  
with present  
perfect

Meaning with present perfect tenses is associated with certain time expressions.  
Contrast with past simple may depend on the choice of time expression.  
Past simple: referring to a specific time  
*yesterday, last week, on Sunday*

Present perfect simple:  
*since 1968* (the beginning of a period of time)  
*already* (indefinite past)

Many time expressions are not associated with a specific tense.  
*I haven't seen Helen recently.*  
*I saw Jim recently.*

## Activities

1

Choose the most appropriate tense underlined.

- a) I can't believe it, inspector. You mean that Smith stole/has stolen/has been stealing money from the till all this time!
- b) You three boys look very guilty! What did you do/have you done/have you been doing since I left/have left the room?
- c) Why on earth didn't you tell/haven't you told me about that loose floorboard? I tripped/have tripped over it just now and hurt myself.
- d) It's a long time since I saw/have seen/have been seeing your brother Paul. What did he do/has he done/has he been doing lately?
- e) I can't believe that you ate/have eaten/have been eating three pizzas already! I only brought/have only brought them in fifteen minutes ago!
- f) Don't forget that you didn't see/haven't seen Mrs Dawson. She has waited/has been waiting outside since 10.30.
- g) What did you think/have you thought of Brighton? Did you stay/Have you stayed there long?
- h) I feel really tired. I weeded/have weeded/have been weeding the garden for the last three hours and I didn't rest/haven't rested for a single moment.

- i) I'm having problems with David. He has called/has been calling me up in the middle of the night and told/telling me his troubles.
- j) How long did you have/have you had/have you been having driving lessons? And did you take/have you taken/have you been taking your test yet?

**2**

Put each verb in brackets into the most appropriate perfect or past tense.

- a) I'm sorry I haven't come/haven't been coming (not come) to class lately. I ..... (work) late in the evenings for the past fortnight.



- b) So far we ..... (not notice) anything unusual, but we ..... (not pay) very close attention.
- c) I wonder if Mary ..... (reach) home yet? She ..... (leave) too late to catch the bus.
- d) Here is the news. The Home Office ..... (announce) that the two prisoners who ..... (escape) from Dartmoor prison earlier this morning ..... (give themselves up) to local police.
- e) ..... (you make up) your minds? What ..... (you decide) to do?
- f) Harry ..... (leave) home rather suddenly and we ..... (not hear) from him since.
- g) Recent research ..... (show) that Columbus ..... (not discover) America, but that Vikings ..... (land) there five hundred years before him.
- h) I think that people ..... (become) tired of the poor quality of television programmes, though they ..... (improve) lately.
- i) ..... (something happen) to the lines? I ..... (try) to get through to Glasgow for the past hour.
- j) Bill ..... (get) that new job, but he ..... (complain) about it ever since.

**3**

Complete each sentence a) to j) with an appropriate ending from 1) to 10). Do not use an ending more than once.

- |   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| a) I haven't been feeling very well .....5..... | 1) ..... time and time again.      |
| b) I went to the dentist's .....                | 2) ..... all my life.              |
| c) I've lived here .....                        | 3) ..... so far.                   |
| d) Don't worry. I haven't been waiting .....    | 4) ..... for the time being.       |
| e) I've written two pages .....                 | 5) ..... for the past hour or two. |
| f) I waited outside your house .....            | 6) ..... yet.                      |
| g) I've warned you about this .....             | 7) ..... till half past eight.     |
| h) I haven't made a decision .....              | 8) ..... for a while.              |
| i) The repair worked .....                      | 9) ..... the other day.            |
| j) I've decided to believe you .....            | 10) ..... long.                    |

4

Rewrite each sentence, beginning as shown, so that the meaning stays the same.

- a) It's a long time since I last went to a football match.  
I haven't been to a football match for a long time.
- b) This is my second visit to Hungary.  
This is the second time .....
- c) I paid this bill earlier, actually.  
Actually I've .....
- d) We haven't been swimming for ages.  
It's ages .....
- e) Mary started learning French five years ago.  
Mary has .....
- f) I am on the tenth page of the letter I am writing.  
So far I .....
- g) After I arrived here, I started to feel better.  
Since arriving here, .....
- h) It's over twenty years since we got married.  
We have .....
- i) The last time I saw Dick was in 1985.  
I haven't .....
- j) There is a definite improvement in your work.  
Lately your work .....

5

Rewrite each sentence so that it contains the word in capitals, and so that the meaning stays the same.

- a) You have missed the beginning of the film. HAS  
The film has already started.
- b) I can't seem to stop sneezing lately. BEEN  
.....
- c) Paul is different from what he used to be. HAS  
.....
- d) This has been my home for thirty years. HAVE  
.....
- e) Eating Chinese food is new to me. BEFORE  
.....
- f) Is there any news? HAPPENED  
.....
- g) I bought my car in 1985 and I'm still driving it. BEEN  
.....
- h) I don't know where my keys are. HAVE  
.....
- i) Sue doesn't have her dictionary with her; it's at home. HAS  
.....
- j) Tony hasn't been to Paris before. FIRST  
.....

## Family Roles: Assigned and Assumed

By Christine Vander Wielen, MSW, CAPSW

Whenever there is a group of people, invariably, there are going to be role assignments. Sometimes it is obvious what the specific roles are and who assigns the roles. For example, on a sports team, the coach decides who will play which position. In drama, the director decides who will play each role. Similarly, in a work setting, the boss decides who will have which responsibility. This structure exists in order for the group to meet a common goal. Although less obvious, there are also role assignments in families.

The idea of family roles began from studying children in alcoholic families. Subsequent study has clearly shown that almost all families have role assignments in varying degrees. Typically, the parents have the greater influence over which role the children will be assigned. These roles are most often imposed on children at an early age. Although they are formed subconsciously by the parents and children, there can be great rigidity. Children can also assume roles. The more chaotic and disorganized the family, the more rigid the roles become. More often than not, the children cooperate with the role assignments. The underlying message to the children is the family needs them to play that role in order to function and manage stress. In times of crisis, the roles become even more pronounced as the family members attempt to negotiate the crisis.

Knowing and understanding role assignments and assumptions can be beneficial because the child's role often persists in adulthood. The role affects one's thinking about themselves, relationships to others, and behavior. There are generally four roles: the hero, the scapegoat, the lost child and the mascot.

Oftentimes, the oldest child is assigned and assumes the role of "hero." The hero is characterized as: being a leader, getting good grades, volunteering to help, involved in many activities, overly mature and a perfectionist.

The scapegoat is the child who is frequently wrongly blamed for all the family's problems. The scapegoat cooperates with the assignment by acting out. He may do poorly in school and be a risk taker and pleasure seeker. In teen years, he may develop an addiction.

The lost child role is characterized as a loner, who retreats into their own world to avoid meaningful relationships. He tries to go unnoticed and will not volunteer an opinion.

The mascot role is characterized as being the class clown. On the outside, he tries to appear happy-go-lucky but is often fearful and anxious. He has superficial relationships, and can be hyper-energetic.

Family roles have strong influences over how we think, feel and behave. Unless recognized and dealt with, these roles and difficulties associated with these roles can persist into adulthood. It is encouraging to know, there is hope. Once the role is recognized, the individual can choose how and if they wish to participate, or not participate in that role. This can be a significant step in improving one's family life and roles in other groups.

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## Roles Within the Family

Families are not democracies. Each family has its own ways of deciding who has the power and authority within the family unit, and which rights, privileges, obligations, and roles are assigned to each family member.

In most families parents are expected to be the leaders or executives of the family; children are expected to follow the leadership of their parents. As children in the middle years grow older, they will ask for, and certainly should be allowed, more autonomy, and their opinions should be considered when decisions are made; however, parents are the final authorities.

Of course there will always be disagreements among the generations. Your child may want to go to the beach on a family vacation; you may want to go to the mountains. He may think he has too many chores to do; you may think he has just the right amount. Let him speak his mind, but the ultimate decision is yours. Explain why you've made the judgment you have, without becoming defensive or apologetic. You won't always be popular in these decisions, but your youngster is still going to love you.

Although generational hierarchies are the most obvious ones within families, other types of hierarchies exist as well. Sometimes they depend on gender. In patriarchal societies such as ours, men have traditionally had power over women, including within the family. Traditionally, fathers have been the providers and authority figures, but while they may be the final decisionmakers, they often have assumed only limited functions beyond that in the family. Mothers have been the caretakers, responsible for the emotional side of the family; they have kept the family together and functioning smoothly. What this means is that mothers and fathers are likely to hold different positions in the family hierarchy, that mothers take primary responsibility and that fathers may have only partial responsibility for day-to-day parental decisions.

Today, however, there are challenges to this traditional gender-based structure. In many families both fathers and mothers are bringing home paychecks. And while women still seem to shoulder the larger share of responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the family, more fathers are assuming greater roles in child-raising and household duties.

It is useful to consider what roles each family member takes within the family, and whether everyone is satisfied with the current arrangement. For example, the oldest children in the family may take on the parental role of caring for their younger siblings. Or grandparents may acquire an important place within the family by assuming a central child-rearing role while parents work.

Think about who is responsible for what within your own family and how the current arrangement is working. Some responsibilities may be open to negotiation, particularly if the family does not seem to be functioning optimally. For example, an older child may be resentful of having too much responsibility for watching over the younger children, while the younger children may also resent the older child playing a parental role. This will result in arguments whenever the oldest child is left in charge. Parents need to review what is going on, discuss how the children are feeling about it, and come up with some alternatives.

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